

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

State of Wisconsin

DATE: March 31, 2014

TO: Bryan Laude, Regional Aware Program Manager

FROM: Donald Almquist, Risk Management

SUBJECT: Concerns for the safety of staff at the Racine Air Monitoring Site.

On March 27, 2014 I visited the Air Monitoring Site in Racine. This site is located at 1519 West Washington Avenue in the City of Racine, County of Racine. I found the building itself to be in quite a state of neglect but specifically so with regarding to the space utilized by DNR staff for air monitoring purposes.

Within the office space used there are instances of multiple water leaks with damage highly visible. Some of the water leakage has occurred near or next to sources of electricity. Any wiring exposed to water should be inspected by the owner of the building to ensure its integrity and guard against fire which could prove fatal to anyone caught in the building. The water damage which is visible, has not been repaired, calls into question the structural integrity of the building especially the roof where some of the equipment resides. (See CFR 1926.501(a)(2) below). There are numerous holes in the plaster and sagging ceiling tiles.

The secondary room again has multiple leaks in the ceiling with sagging tiles. There is a window which is the only method of gaining access to the roof where equipment is located. This means of access leaves our staff vulnerable to numerous injuries and possibly under adverse conditions a fatality.

Once out on the roof the only means of access to a higher roof where the equipment is situated is a wooden stairway that besides not meeting current standards, is in a state of disrepair, extremely steep with a rise/run in the steps of $14/6^{1/2}$ inches, (standard rise/run is $7"/11"$). This is double the rise and nearly half the run, a recipe for tripping and falling from a height. The base of the stairway is not secured to the roof surface and it is not secured at the uppermost portion to the wall. There is no certification as to the load limits of the stairway. There is barely enough space to install a properly constructed access stairway. There is no fall protection at this point of access to the upper roof. There is nothing to guard against slippery surfaces on the stairway either.

If access to the upper roof is made there is no fall protection in place, equipment is located near a leading edge with a parapet a foot or less above the edge. (See CFR 1926.501(b)(1) below) There are also numerous trip hazards. Rain and ice or snow can also create hazardous slippery conditions.

CFR 1926.501(a)(2)

The employer shall determine if the walking/working surfaces on which its employees are to work have the strength and structural integrity to support employees safely. Employees shall be allowed to work on those surfaces only when the surfaces have the requisite strength and structural integrity.

CFR 1926.501(b)(1)

"Unprotected sides and edges." Each employee on a walking/working surface (horizontal and vertical surface) with an unprotected side or edge which is 6 feet (1.8 m) or more above a lower level shall be

protected from falling by the use of guardrail systems, safety net systems, or personal fall arrest systems.

There is a sink in the primary room that has a note on it stating it has not been functional since October of 2007. This again reflects the neglected maintenance of the building. There is a toilet facility in the hallway smaller than most household closets with no sink to wash hands. Again there is evidence of leaks and disrepair. I would not even venture in to attempt to see if the toilet even flushed. There exists a lack of sanitary facilities for use by building occupants. There is also a concern that all of the chipping paint may contain lead and there is mold growth observed in various places. This raises the question of what may be hidden and what are the health ramifications of any molds and possibly any lead that may exist for occupants.

In summary it appears that there is no desire on the part of the owner to keep the building in good condition. The structural integrity of the building is tenuous at best. The amount of damage within the building calls into question why the building inspector would allow occupancy of the building or if he has been made aware of the conditions. If an inspection dictated a move you would most likely have to be out immediately. The scope of repairs to the building are out of our purview and that coupled with the fact there are numerous issues addressed by OSHA Standards which the State of Wisconsin subscribes to it would be my recommendation to find an alternative site for the work being done in Racine that meets the conditions for monitoring and yet provides for the health and safety of staff.

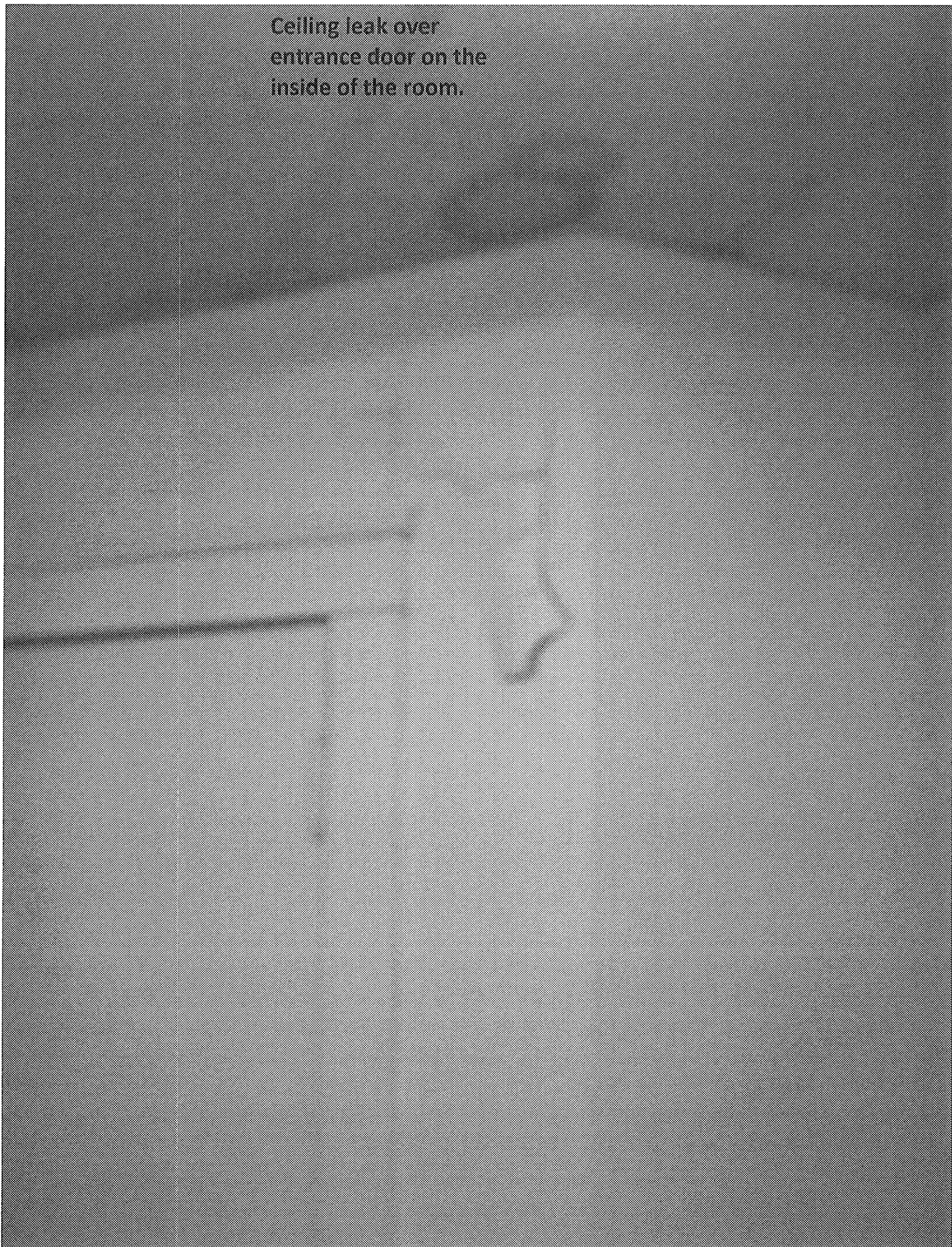
Respectfully
Donald Almquist

Attachments: 16 Photos

Racine Air Monitoring Site

WISCONSIN DNR
AIR POLLUTION MONITORING SITE
OPERATED BY: AIR POLLUTION CONTROL SECTION
AND

Ceiling leak over
entrance door on the
inside of the room.



Expanded look at ceiling
leaks over entrance
door. Note the leak over
the detector that is
hardwired to the
electrical system.



Sink in the air monitoring equipment room has been non-functioning since October 2007.

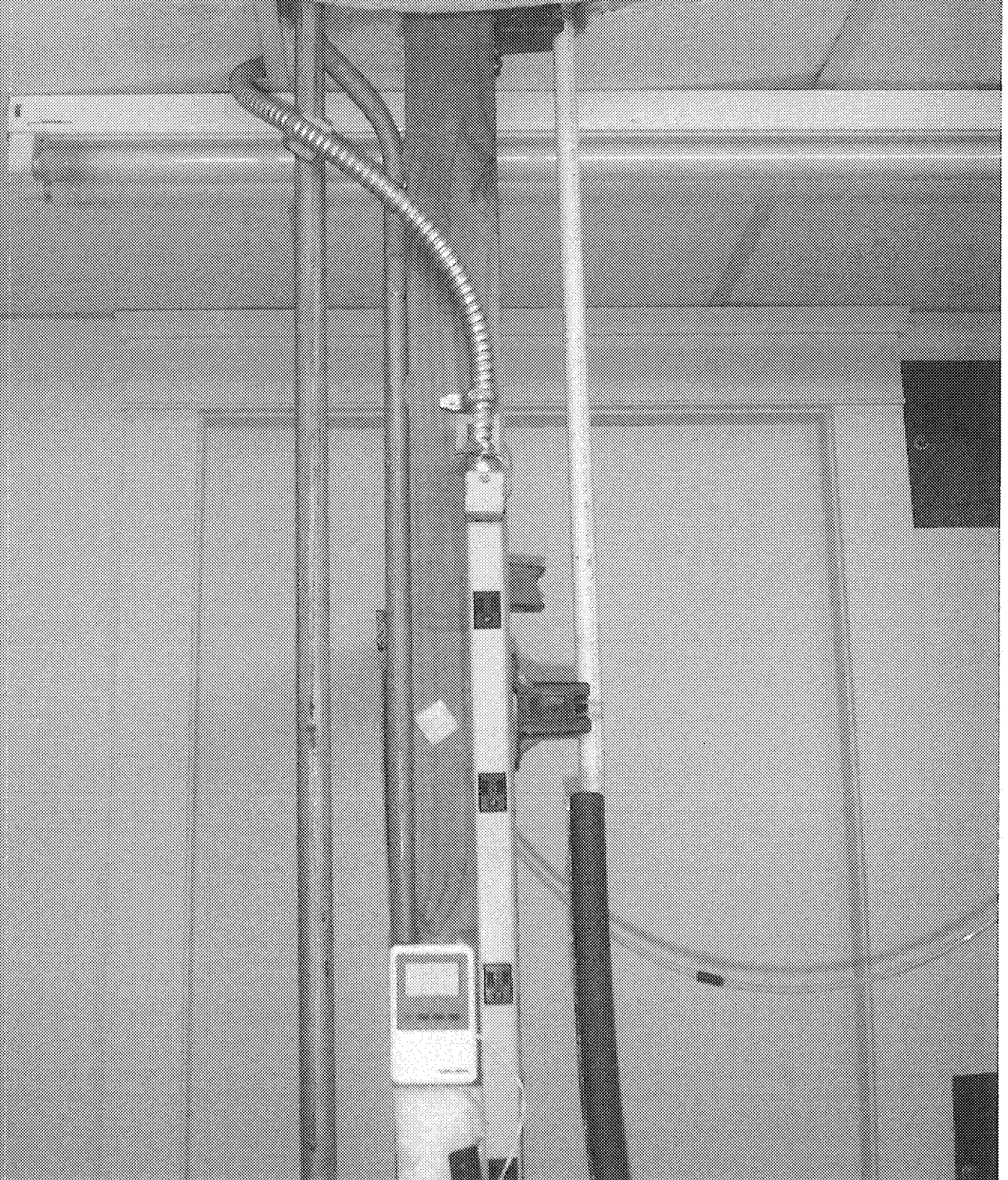
Don't use this Sink. It does not drain, use the bathroom sink in the hallway.

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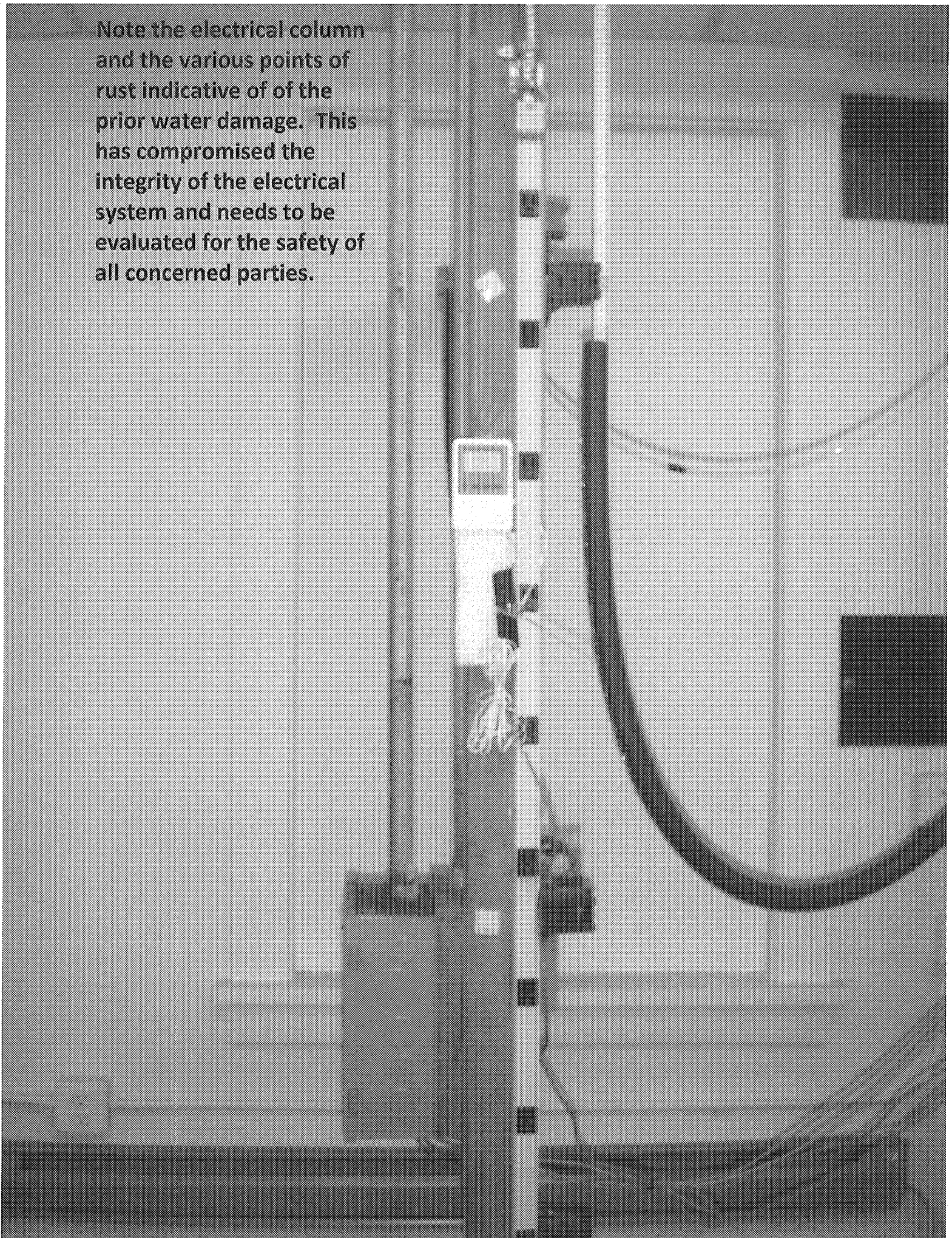


Sink in Air monitoring
equipment room.

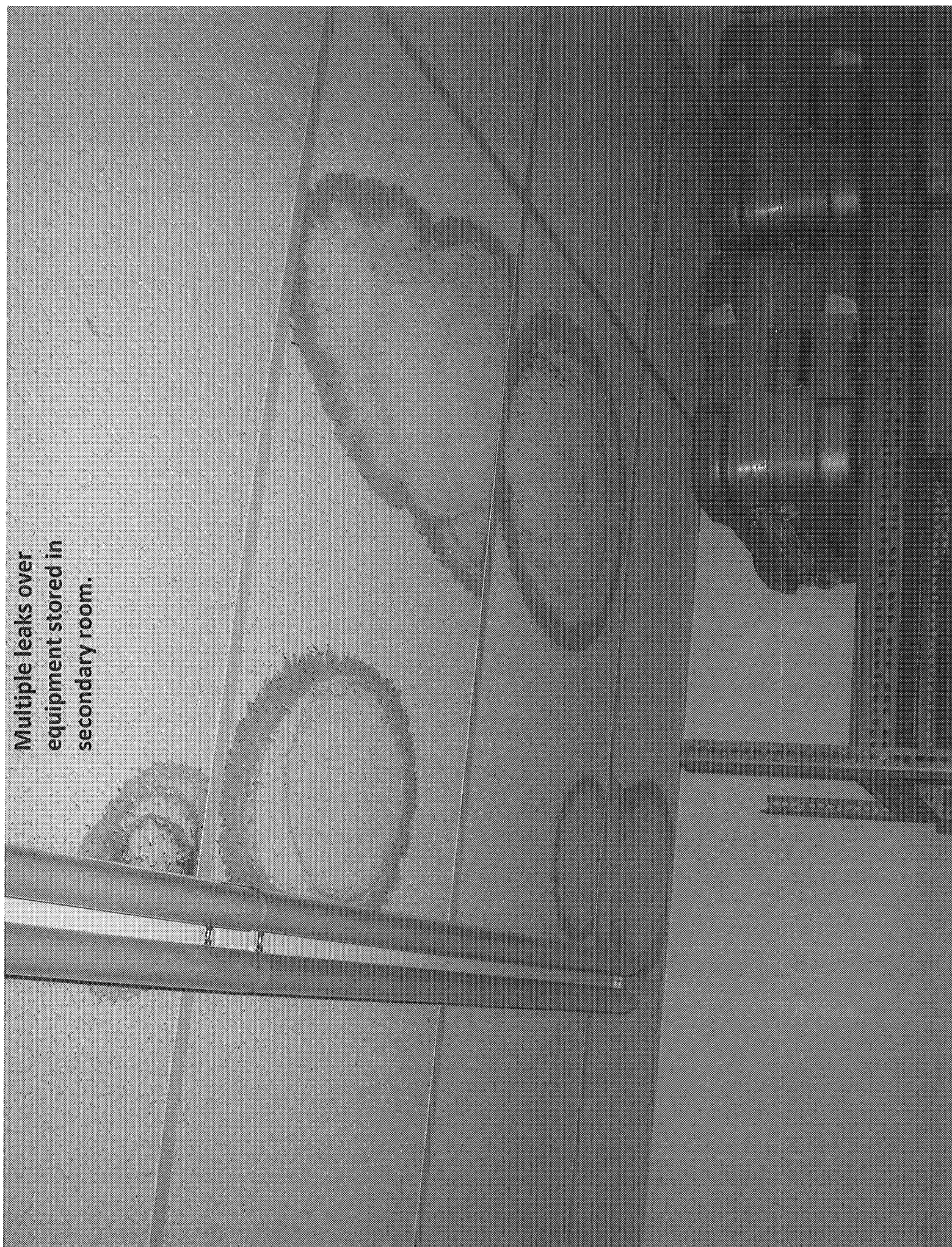
Note the water damage over the column that supplies electrical service to the air monitoring equipment in the room is in jeopardy of being compromised and possible starting a fire, risking life, and damaging equipment.



Note the electrical column and the various points of rust indicative of of the prior water damage. This has compromised the integrity of the electrical system and needs to be evaluated for the safety of all concerned parties.



Multiple leaks over
equipment stored in
secondary room.



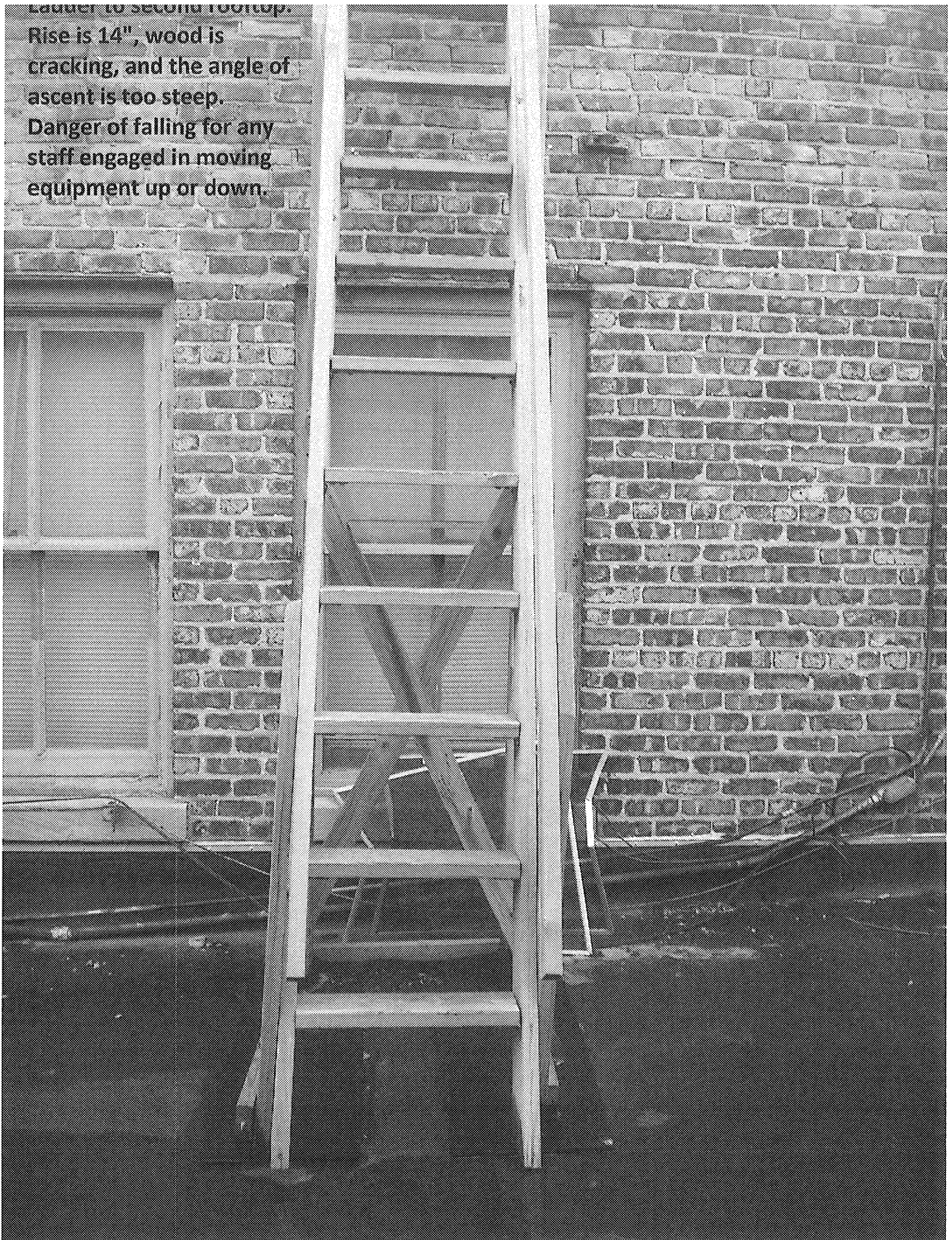
Leak over window in secondary room. Note: that the staff need to contort themselves to crawl out the window to access the rooftop and run the risk of slipping and injuring themselves in the process.



Ladder to second rooftop.

Rise is 14", wood is cracking, and the angle of ascent is too steep.

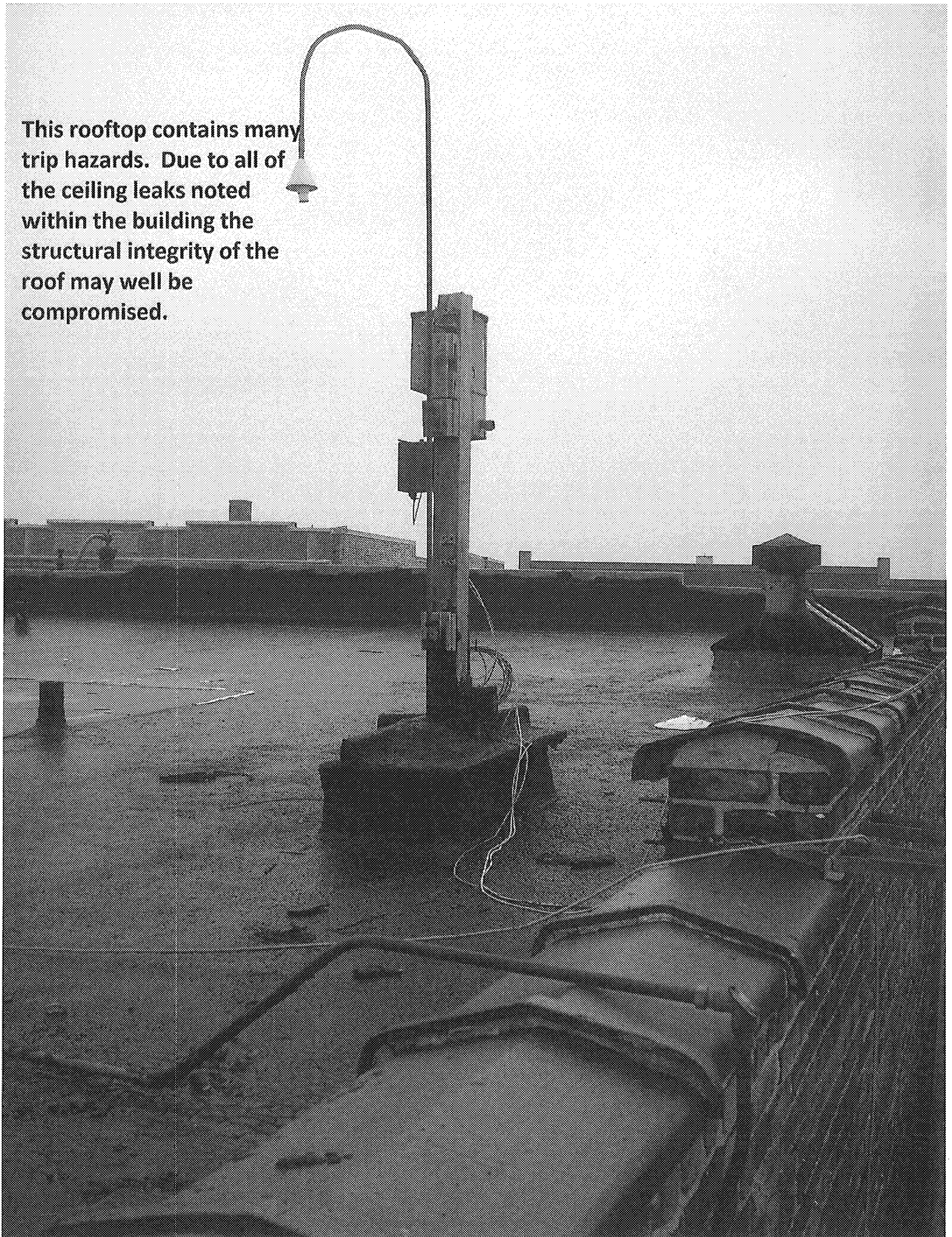
Danger of falling for any staff engaged in moving equipment up or down.



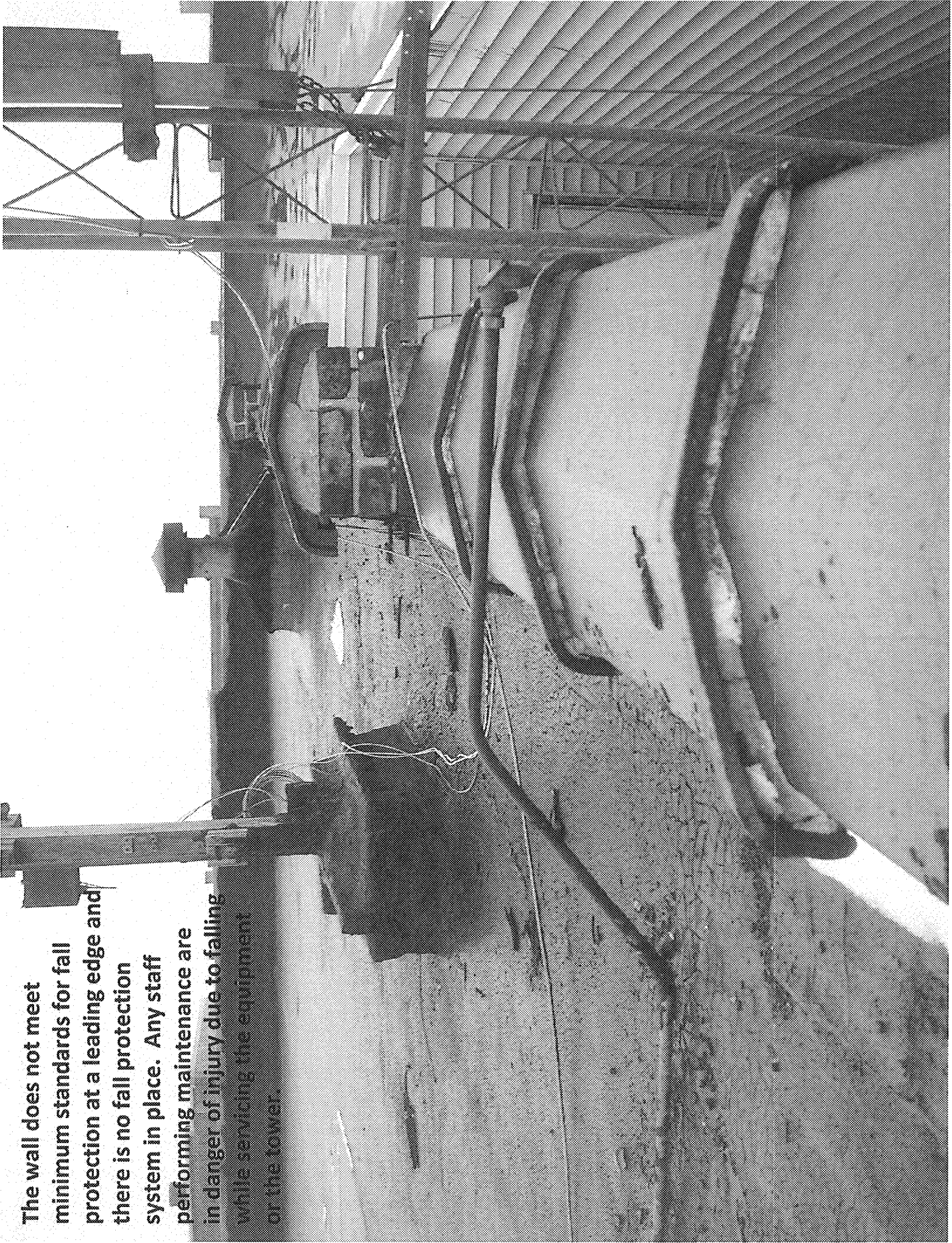
In addition to the other problems noted the ladder is not secured at the base nor at the top of the wall. There is no fall arrest system in place to protect staff members trying to ascend or descend this ladder. This situation demands a permanent and safe solution.



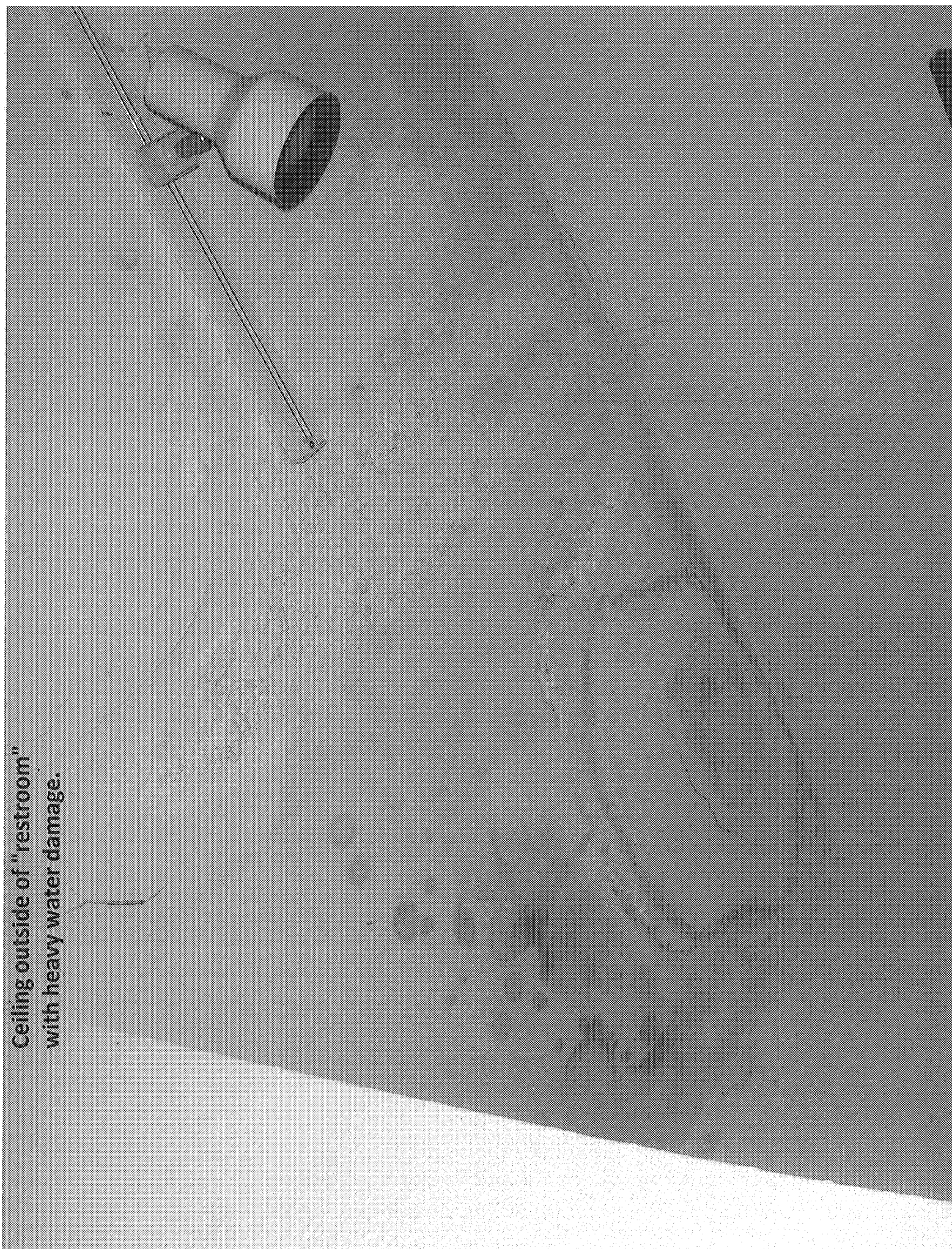
This rooftop contains many trip hazards. Due to all of the ceiling leaks noted within the building the structural integrity of the roof may well be compromised.



The wall does not meet minimum standards for fall protection at a leading edge and there is no fall protection system in place. Any staff performing maintenance are in danger of injury due to falling while servicing the equipment or the tower.



Ceiling outside of "restroom"
with heavy water damage.



Skylight over commode in "restroom".
No sink in room for handwashing.



Commode in "Restoom" No
sink available to wash hands.

